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STEPS  
THROUGH  
THE STREAM



BY  
MARGARET STEWART SIMPSON







STEPS  
THROUGH THE STREAM;  
OR,  
Daily Readings for a Month.

BY  
MARGARET STEWART SIMPSON.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
M. F. BARBOUR,  
AUTHOR OF 'THE WAY HOME,' 'THE SOUL GATHERER,' ETC.



LONDON:  
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.  
1880.

141. m. 890.

MORRISON AND GIBB EDINBURGH,  
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

*IN LOVING MEMORY*

OF

**Frances Ridley Habergal.**



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# CONTENTS.



	PAGE
Prefatory Note, . . . . .	9
Introduction, . . . . .	11
1. Bethlehem, . . . . .	15
2. A Trio, . . . . .	18
3. Jesus Knocking, . . . . .	22
4. Manna, . . . . .	24
5. Only a Step to Jesus, . . . . .	27
6. Olivet, . . . . .	31
7. Rest after Trembling, . . . . .	35
8. Soul-Gathering, . . . . .	38
9. A Threefold Cord, . . . . .	44
10. Carrying the Message, . . . . .	47
11. Kidron, . . . . .	49
12. Three Comes, . . . . .	52
13. Standard-Bearers, . . . . .	55
14. The Fourth in the Fire, . . . . .	58
15. Storing and Scattering, . . . . .	61
16. Jericho, . . . . .	64
17. The Name of Jesus, . . . . .	67

	PAGE
18. On the Way Home, . . . . .	69
19. His Wings, . . . . .	72
20. Perfect through Sufferings, . . . . .	75
21. The Lake of Galilee, . . . . .	78
22. Prayer, . . . . .	81
23. Praise, . . . . .	84
24. Heaven Opened, . . . . .	87
25. Not Condemned, . . . . .	90
26. Zarephath, . . . . .	93
27. Seeing the Invisible, . . . . .	97
28. As Little Children, . . . . .	100
29. Sabbath-Keeping, . . . . .	104
30. Much More, . . . . .	107
31. Jordan, . . . . .	110

## PREFATORY NOTE.

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WE all remember as children when coming to the side of a stream, how anxiously we looked for safe stepping-stones by which to cross it. In this little book we have sought to bring together some rugged stones on which our feet have rested in crossing life's streams. With them we would raise a pillar of remembrance on the farther side of the swelling flood.

We fancy we can hear the children's voice asking, as they stood round the heap at Gilgal, 'What mean these stones?' We picture to ourselves their wondering looks as they listen to the story. On the evening of that memorable day when the Israelites had walked dry-shod over the bed of Jordan, a man from each tribe carried on his

shoulder a stone to the place where he lodged that night, and thence to the heap at Gilgal.

Some years ago, when we were planning a scheme of subjects for a girls' weekly Bible reading, it occurred to us to place ourselves each day at some well-known point in Palestine, and see all that had happened there. A few of such outlined studies we have put in this little book, only as finger-posts to what may be to some a new way of grouping Bible histories.

M. S. S.

## INTRODUCTION.

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IF the removal of such a voice as that of Frances Ridley Havergal from the lower choir to the choir above be the means of tuning other voices to the same song, the Church is only the richer.

Looking back over twenty years, we see that great progress has been made in enlisting young women as workers for Christ. Few among us would have stopped to dip the pen in ink save to write a letter, or cast up a sum, but for the heart-wound of bereavement or the imprisonment of suffering. Some have passed scatheless through fires of tribulation, only emerging the purer and the stronger, because they carried a ministry for others out from among the flames in which perished all they else had cared to live for. Yes, some have got their commission even at the furnace door—the

one moment thinking their all was lost for ever, and the next becoming conscious of the pressure of the Everlasting Arm. At the first this ministry cost somewhat. The message was faltered out amid derision ; the messenger had to meet the glance of scorn. There were moments when the false heart within even struck hands with the lying traitor without, to be rid of the burden of this ministry ; but Jesus broke the compact and set His servant free. Since then no price would part us from it. To our own eye it may look so very small a thing that while the present thread passes through our fingers, it threatens to break and vanish. But a vigilant eye resteth on it ; unsleeping intercession guards it. Many seals of which we are ignorant may attach to it already. It is the only thing we can take out of the world along with us. It will bear the light of the city above, and will be in keeping with all that is heard and seen as we pass up the golden street to lay it down at the feet of Him who gave it.

The God-speed to each effort floats downward from

our Master in the skies. The blessing is overhead, and must descend. The little book is a mere channel. The message is divine. Not one of the heavenly Speaker's words returns to Him void: 'It shall accomplish that which I please.' The result is not uncertain. He who speaks through His messengers the most helpless and untried, never did anything by halves, never has failed. These are the words of a Sovereign: 'It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.' How this shall be done He will decide—not we. Have we not many times set ourselves to carry His message to a certain individual or a given place, to find afterwards that the Sender had prepared another ear to receive it, and pointed to another destination? The arrow passed the object we saw before us; unknown to us, it lodged elsewhere. If it were so with a word spoken or letter written, how much more with a book? It changes hands, changes hemispheres, gets soiled, parts with its binding. A few stray leaves remain. A careless eye wanders over them, and is fixed. Tears drop. Ministering angels are rejoicing. The



message is believed. It has prospered in the thing whereto Jehovah sent it.

The object of these introductory sentences is to secure for this little book the interests and prayers of those whose pleasure it is to circulate such. The artless details of incidents illustrating the vitality of God's word will come home to some who may still imagine that to work for God is a task above them. Like many other first efforts, it is, as we have hinted, some of the 'afterward' fruit of a season of suffering not for the time 'joyous, but grievous,' through which the writer lately had to pass. It may have to lie long all unheeded in the possession of some for whom it may yet contain a message. 'I read the story of the children's life long ago,' writes one, 'and put it on the shelf, thinking it very touching, but thinking of it no more. This year we lost our own child. We remembered the book and took it down again, and it guided us both to our Heavenly Shepherd.'

M. F. B.

## FIRST DAY.



## Bethlehem.

‘Let us now go even unto Bethlehem.’—LUKE ii. 15.

**B**ETHLEHEM furnished not a few of Israel's heroes. Its citizenship takes in such old Jewish names as those of Joab, Asahel, Abishai, and Elhanan (David's warriors), along with Ibzan the judge, and Chimham, who might all be included with many others in Ezra's beautiful title, ‘Children of Bethlehem.’

It was one of the spots around which Jacob's tenderest associations gathered, the birthplace of his youngest son and the grave of Rachel. Here to her dear memory he raised one of the earliest tombstones, far away from any of the family resting-places. Sadly would the caravan wend its onward way, while the mourner lingered near the pillar, loth to leave it unless to turn to lavish on

her Benoni, his little Benjamin, the love that had been peculiarly hers.

Generations have passed away. By the same road we see two women approaching. Their faces are marked with grief, and a common love and sorrow give birth to words which stand alone for their beauty. The yellow grain is falling before the reapers all along their path till they reach the gate, to find that Bethlehem is moved at their coming, nor rests till Ruth is seated in one of its richest houses.

It was her own little great-grandchild who fed his father's sheep on Bethlehem's hills. So well did David love the place, that amid the noise and tumult of the battle his heart turned thither once again with intense longing, when he cried, 'Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!'

But the crowning lustre was cast around Bethlehem by the appearance of the great choir of heavenly visitants, bearing the tidings of the advent of David's promised Son. Yet scarcely have the Magi laid their treasure at His feet, when Bethlehem's rejoicing is silenced. Herod's cruel mandate has gone forth, and the broken-

hearted mothers think they can hear Rachel mourning as they gather round her tomb to weep.

Thou Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee has He come forth that is to be ruler in Israel.

See what prophets long had told  
In the darkest days of old,  
Now all fully brought to light  
In that Sun which broke the night.

See the star that marks the spot  
Which the Eastern Magi sought,  
Where the choir of angels sing,  
'Glory to our God and King.'

See the shepherd leave his fold,  
Hasting that he may behold  
The Messiah ; yes, 'tis He,  
Born in Bethlehem for me !

## SECOND DAY.



## A Trio.

'Grace for grace.'—JOHN i. 16.

'Strength to strength.'—Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

'Glory to glory.'—2 COR. iii. 18.

HERE are three stages in a believer's history John places us at the great starting-point: 'Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.' Immediately we think of the greatest manifestation of Christ's wondrous love: 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor.' It is a daily exchange between our poverty and His riches. Bunyan, who had got so far before us in his perception of that grace, says: 'All these graces of God that now were green in me, were yet but like these cracked groats that rich men carry in their purse while their gold is in their

trunk at home. I saw my gold was in my trunk at home in Christ my Lord and Saviour.'

When we pray, God has promised to pour on us the 'spirit of grace;' when we sing, it is to be 'with grace in our hearts;' and when we speak, it is always to be 'with grace.' Paul's summing up of all this is: 'By the grace of God we have our conversation in the world.' Let this be true of us, down even to such minute details as the ending of our letters, where, instead of our often meaningless words, we might say after Paul, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.'

'Strength to strength.'

This reminds us of the margin in Isa. xl.: 'They that wait on the Lord shall change their strength.' As we grow in grace we gain in strength, for the two are inseparable. Our faithful Lord is ever watching to pour in new strength, and it often comes to His children in most unlikely ways.

In the recess of a lobby in a Cunard steamer, between Boston and Queenstown, a few camp-stools were collected for a small meeting with the stewards. There was simple reading and prayer, but it was found rather up-hill work. But through the open grating over a state-room door

God had carried the word to one of His children, unable from weakness to lift her head. After the friends returned home, they received a letter thanking them for that meeting, and saying how to one unseen the words had come from God as comfort to her soul, reminding her that she was not forgotten by Him, and she was strengthened.

‘Glory to glory.’

But who may lift the veil to speak of this? It hath not entered into the heart of man, and so we bow and say, ‘Even so, Father.’ And yet the word stands written, to show that even in the realms of bliss there will be progress too.

‘*Now* we see through a glass darkly ; but *then* face to face : *now* I know in part ; but *then* shall I know, even as also I am known.’ As we look at those weights in God’s scales, ‘now’ and ‘then,’ we begin to see things in their right proportion and true value. Now, it is the ‘light affliction ;’ then, it is the ‘eternal weight of glory.’ When in conscious communion with Him, we have seen the scales adjust themselves ; the weight of glory eternal opposed to the feathers of time. The scene, if not the sense of suffering, is changed ; the prison become palace walls.

She whose words on this very text have so thrilled us could now write a truer song, a better description, though we could not yet comprehend the strain, nor these dull ears resolve its melody :—

“ ‘ From glory unto glory ! ’ Be this our joyous song,  
As on the King’s own highway we bravely march along !  
“ From glory unto glory ! ” O word of stirring cheer,  
As dawns the solemn brightness of another glad New Year ! ’

“ ‘ From glory unto glory ! ’ O marvels of the word !  
“ With open face beholding the glory of the Lord,”  
We, even we (O wondrous grace !), “ are changed into the  
same,”

The image of our Saviour, to glorify His Name.

‘ Now onward, ever onward, from “ strength to strength ”  
we go,  
While “ grace for grace ” abundantly shall from His fulness  
flow,  
To glory’s full fruition from glory’s foretaste here,  
Until His Very Presence crown our happiest New Year ! ’



THIRD DAY.  

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**Jesus Knocking.**

‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in.’—REV. iii. 20.

**I**T was a bright morning in the beginning of May, when a young girl, leaving her invalid friend to rest, stepped from the verandah of the hotel and passed quickly down the street of a little Highland village. The burn ran merrily past the low thatched cottage at whose door she knocked. A smile of welcome greeted her from the neatly-dressed woman who answered her summons, and she soon found herself in the tidy kitchen. She was fresh from scenes of much blessing, and only wondered that any could refuse Christ’s invitation.

Mrs. N. had soon told all her difficulties. She was doing her best, waiting to feel better, and could not catch the meaning of faith.

After other promises, the visitor repeated the one which heads this page, and said, 'Christ is knocking. My visit to-day is one of His knocks at the door of your heart. You did not keep *me* waiting outside, yet you have kept Jesus all those years.'

The sad face showed signs of the inward struggle, and tears dropped quickly down as she said, 'But how can I know that it is meant for me?'

'Would you be sure if you saw *Margaret N.* written there? Would you not say there might be others of the same name?' Again we read the verse, laying emphasis on the two words *any man*. 'That must mean you. If you do your part, God is sure to do His.'

Prayer followed, in which she asked Jesus to come into her heart, and then the whole truth flashed upon her: the difficulties were gone, and she was left rejoicing in the welcomed Saviour.

In the days that followed, the light in her face showed the change to those around, and her great concern was for their souls. These many years have seen her passing through fires of sorrow, but never has she doubted the presence of her Saviour.

'There is room in my heart, Lord Jesus,  
There is room in my heart for Thee.'

## FOURTH DAY.



## Manna.

'Give us this day our daily bread.'—MATT. vi. 11.

ONE meaning of manna is, 'it is a portion,' which makes us think of the marginal reading in Job, 'I have laid up the words of Thy mouth more than my appointed portion.' As the manna kept over-night was unfit for use, so we have to receive day by day fresh food from our heavenly Father. Scripture is very precise,—'the portion of a day in his day.' Each man had different capacities, but they all gathered according to their eating, the result being that, from the youngest to the oldest, 'he that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.'

Some Christians rest content with the bare necessities of life, with scanty and hurried feeding from the Word of God. But when we try to discover

the secret of power of those who are giants, not babes in the kingdom, from the converse of the breakfast-table, down through the letters written and visitors received, it is easily traced back to the early morning hour alone with God.

One has said, 'We notice that a dwarf may *eat*, but not *offer* the bread of his God.' So with dwarfed Christians ; they are unfit for high service. If we are satisfied, we never grow ; it is the children and babes who grow. 'David went on growing and growing.' The inner and outer life go on apace. When our lives become saturated with His presence through the Word, many questions are solved, and the standard raised. We do not ask ourselves to satisfy our conscience, 'Is it right or wrong?' but, 'Will it, even for a few seconds, trail my robe royal in the dust, dull my ear to His voice, spoil my relish for heaven's food, make the hand that is His more than mine tremble, or the lips falter when speaking His praises?' It is possible that at some time when we mourn His absence, it is an action of our own which has drawn a shade over the brightness of His face, so that we cannot reflect the light to others.

'The manna ceased on the morrow after they

had eaten of the old corn of the land, neither had the children of Israel manna any more.' We know not how soon our daily supply of manna shall cease because our call has come to enter Canaan. Let us from this day forth feed more largely on the Word, and then our natural occupation will be that of bread-givers.

'O thou whom Christ has taught to pray  
To Him for manna now,  
In secret each returning day  
Before His footstool bow.

'He is Himself that Living Bread  
Descended from on high,  
On which the spirit that is fed  
Shall never, never die.'

FIFTH DAY.



Only a Step to Jesus.

‘Only a step to Jesus ;  
Then why not take it now ?  
Come, and thy sin confessing,  
To Him, thy Saviour, bow.’

‘**W**HEN he was yet a great way off, his father met him.’ God the Father comes to you, presenting His Son Jesus, saying, ‘This is my gift. Will you accept Him?’ ‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (John iii. 16). He could not have given more, and less would not have been enough. He sent His Son forth from His bosom to meet the storm of wrath which hung over you. He met it. On Him it spent its fury.

‘Unless you take Jesus, He can never be yours. You do not expect to be satisfied until you have

eaten the bread of your daily meal. You do not expect to recover if you do not use the physician's remedy. Be persuaded, then, to take Christ now. You intend to do it some day. Why not to-day? You will bring joy to the heart of Jesus by claiming Him as God's gift to you. You need not wait till another hour strikes. Say just now with your heart, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." "Jesus is mine."

Words like these were spoken to some men in a mason's shed during part of their dinner hour. They were seated on blocks of freestone and granite, with fir trees and birches around. The hymn was sung which begins :

'There is a time, we know not when,  
A point, we know not where,  
That marks the destiny of men  
To glory or despair.'

God carried the message home to a granite-hewer. He had always lived an outwardly respectable life, and kept apart from wicked companions, so that we could not tell if he were Christ's or not. But he confessed now that he had nothing to appear before God with. Nightly after this he went to meetings, hoping to find peace. At last he felt

that he must decide. The one who had spoken in the shed walked with him along the country road after the service, pressing him to accept Christ; and he said he would never forget the post of the gate where, on that moonlight night, he took God's gift, and gave himself to Jesus. He began eagerly to watch for the souls of his companions, and the change upon him was seen by all. But his time of service was to be short. Not long after he died in the Edinburgh Infirmary, giving bright testimony that the Unspeakable Gift was still his.

Satan makes you think it is a long way; but you have only to take the deciding step across the boundary line. It is only because you do not dream what you are losing that you can remain where you are. The poor people who live in hovels, with one door alike for themselves and their pigs and hens, and a hole in the roof to let the smoke go through, are contented. But let them but see one of our nice cottages, with doors, chimneys, and windows, and offer it to them, would they not make the exchange? Turn your back on the husks, and you will find your Father already on the road to meet you. And there is a



promise, the preciousness of which you do not dream of: 'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.' He will lead you step by step; and you can say in triumph more than David did, when he said, 'There is but a step between me and death,' for you may say, 'There is but a step between me and glory.'

'Light after darkness,  
Gain after loss,  
Strength after suffering,  
Crown after cross.  
Sweet after bitter,  
Song after sigh,  
Home after wandering,  
Praise after cry.

'Near after distant,  
Gleam after gloom,  
Love after loneliness,  
Life after tomb.  
After long agony,  
Rapture of bliss!  
Right was the pathway,  
Leading to this!'

## SIXTH DAY.



## Olivet.

‘Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.’—JOHN viii. 1.

MANY of us have little pieces of wood which friends have brought to us from Olivet. To the Jews who prepare these mementoes, the fashioning of them has become a common toil, meaningless through long usage. Everywhere we meet the scattered ‘tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,’ and some of these exiles not only love their land, but long for a Messiah yet to come.

One day, in a foreign capital, a friend’s carriage drove us to the door of a curiosity shop. In the window was a collection of old china, silver, bronzes, and articles of *vertu*. But the strangest sight was their owner, an aged son of Abraham, with grey hairs and weatherbeaten face, not soon to be forgotten. He was one of those who are

still waiting for the Consolation of Israel. He used to call occasionally on our friend, and when she asked: 'What new article have you got to show me to-day?' he would reply: 'Oh, I have just come for another talk with you.' His heart craved for the only One who could satisfy it. Next day, when he brought home our purchases, we were unable to see him. He sent us this message: 'Give the lady this parcel, and tell her whenever I come where any one is suffering, my custom is to leave a promise. This is for her: "The Lord will strengthen him on the bed of languishing."' Poor Jew! loving the words of comfort, and yet not seeing Him in whom they are all fulfilled.

Surely none of us can read the records of this Mount of Olives as we would a common page of geography, seeing no more than he did. For centuries it has remained a silent witness to Christ's life on earth. By day He taught in the temple, and at night, when He was weary with the strivings of men, and only wanted the solitude broken by His Father's voice, He sought its shade. It was here that He sent forth two of His disciples to find the colt on which He was to make His royal entrance into the city of the Great King. Many

times before it had given its branches to make booths for the Feast of Tabernacles. Nehemiah's proclamation ran: 'Go forth unto the mount to fetch the olive branches to make booths;' and now, again, the children strip the palm and olive trees, and spread a green carpet in the way of Him whom they hail as King. On the morrow, as Christ and His disciples crossed from Bethany, He saw the fruitless fig-tree and pronounced its doom. Not long after, as He sat upon the mount, four of His disciples, in a brief lull amid the rapid events of those days, came to ask Him for some token of the coming storm. Two days before the Passover, He is found again in His loved Bethany; while the priests in the city were plotting, He was speaking words of comfort to Mary while Lazarus sat at meat, and

'A solemn gladness even crowned  
The purple brows of Olivet.'

It is not unmeaning that three of the evangelists tell us that, 'when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.' From its height we look down upon the garden of Gethsemane, which was the scene of the awful agony.

It was meet that this should be the Mount of Ascension, the last spot on earth on which His feet rested as He went to His Father. And the olive trees will bud and blossom, and their fruit be gathered, till it 'shall cleave in the midst' at His return.

'He will stand on the Mount of Olives,  
But not as a pilgrim then ;  
He will want in that day no shelter  
Among the children of men.

'There were nights in the Mount of Olives,  
There were days in the desert lone,  
That the Shepherd His sheep might ransom,  
And the Lord might call in His own.'

## SEVENTH DAY.

*Rest after Trembling.*

'I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble.'—HAB. iii. 16.

**H**ABAKKUK gives a terrible description of his state when God spoke to him. 'When I heard, my lips quivered at the voice : rottenness entered into my bones.' It instantly recalls what Job, Ezekiel, and Daniel said as they all shared the same experience. Each child of God has a similar story to tell of how they shared in this trembling before they knew the blessed rest. Some betray it in their faces, as tears and wrinkles tell of sleepless nights, while others conceal it under a merry laugh.

An earnest evangelist at a meeting was giving an account of a man being awakened who had led a dishonest, impure life. Next day, his clerk

called and said, 'As you have given an account of me in public, I beg to leave your service.' The gentleman replied, 'I knew nothing of you, but the Lord did.' The result was the man's conversion. Rest came after his trembling. He does not grudge now the tossing, wakeful night; far better so, than rest here and trembling in eternity. If one unsaved read these lines, just think how awful an eternity of unrest would be, were it nothing else. Do not put it off to the dying hour, thinking that then will be a fitter moment, and you will have time to spare. Too often on the death-bed the sensibilities are dulled, and the mind is only taken up with the pain of the moment. Come to the death-bed of a doctor respected in his profession, and hear his dying sentence, 'Give me a little laudanum and brandy to brace me up for the last.'

Abilities and learning will not help you, unless you have learnt what is hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes, that One has trembled in your stead and suffered for you.

A modern poet wrote the following lines as an epitaph for one of the most distinguished sons of science:—

'He would have Nature for his mistress, so  
He wooed and won her ; till, by love made bold,  
She showed him more than mortal man should know,  
Then slew him, lest her secrets should be told.'

But let us go to his dying bed with a friend whom he knew to be a Christian, and hear his answer to the question, 'How do you feel?' 'I feel like a pig floating down a stream.'

Yet learning need be no hindrance. One equally distinguished in the path of science used to delight in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah ; and in the Bible, from which he used to conduct family worship, at the fifth verse, over the word 'our' he has pencilled 'my.' Here is a verse from one of his favourite hymns :—

'For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,  
And I have died in Thee ;  
Thou'rt risen : my bands are all untied ;  
And now Thou liv'st in me.  
When purified, made white, and tried,  
Thy glory then for me !'



EIGHTH DAY.  

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## Soul-Gathering.

‘If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand.’—EZEK. xxxiii. 8.

**I**N a villa on the bay of Cannes, one bright morning in February, when the blue Mediterranean looked its loveliest, a few girls were gathering for a meeting. They had walked through olive woods, and passed gardens of aloes and cassia, and now came to spend a short hour together in considering ‘the best means of bringing souls to Christ.’ The study of the chapter, a verse of which heads this page, was blest to them, and one, at least, had her lips unsealed that day. She had only recently been brought to Jesus, and told us afterwards how thankful she was that she had then been enabled for the first time to pour out her heart before others to the Lord.

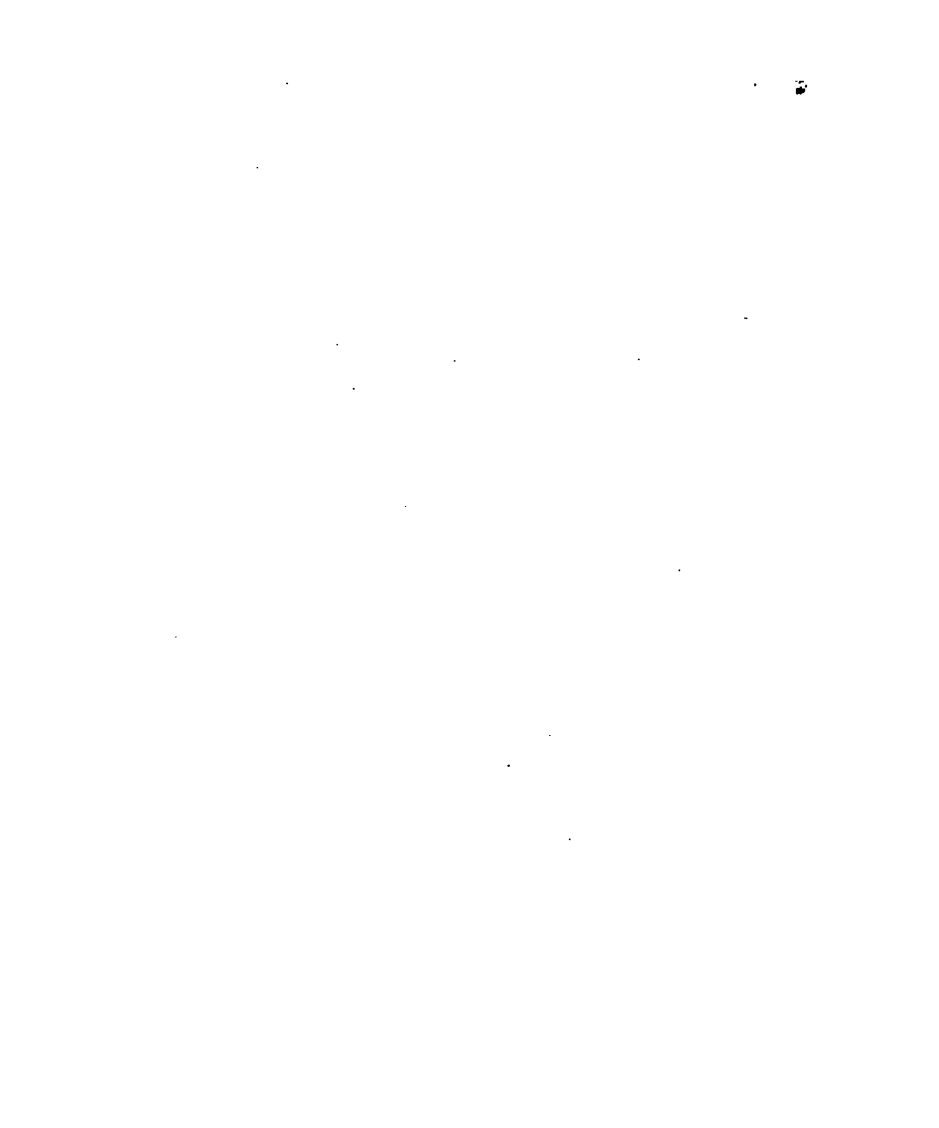
We all have felt how difficult it is to make a beginning in confessing Christ ; but if the burden of unsaved souls lies heavy on our hearts, we will soon cease to feel it hard. Some of us have known the pang, which we can hardly describe, of hearing of the death of some one—it may be a school friend or some relative—to whom we might have spoken, and now we are left with the terrible doubt as to their safety. Or a conversation may be cut short by death. There was a strong, active country girl, who had won the hearts of all her fellow-servants by her willingness to learn and to help. She had not been long in the house, but her mistress asked her one Sabbath evening if she loved Jesus ; and she said solemnly, ‘No.’ They had some talk, but it seemed wiser not to press the matter further. Three days after, she rose earlier than usual, and was all heart in her work. In the chorus of the hymn, ‘Joyful, joyful shall the meeting be,’ at family prayers, her voice rose above the rest. Being the youngest, she ran down-stairs with the servants’ Bibles, and quickly returned to the room she was cleaning. A faint cry was heard ; a fellow-servant rushed in from the next room ; the duster had dropped from her hand, and before medical aid

could be obtained, she was dead. She had told a believing fellow-servant of the Sabbath evening interview, and added, 'I have something to tell you,' and was observed to be more anxious than ever about her work. It seemed as if in the short interval she had done as she was asked—given her heart to Jesus.

The word to us is, 'Keep this man.' We must be, in the highest sense, our brother's keeper. Let us not have to say at the last day, when we give in our account, 'As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.'

Two young girls were travelling for some hours together. They had met for the first time, and, at the terminus, would go their different ways. The time passed quickly in talk of common interests and mutual friends. The elder had a rule, which she sought to carry through life, of never being alone with a person without speaking of Jesus. After a struggle with herself, she asked her friend if she knew Jesus. 'Oh yes; and I have been longing to speak to *you*, but I could not muster courage.'

It must grieve the Lord of glory, and make angels look down with sad astonishment, to see





CROSSING THE RIVER.

P. 43.

*By the kind permission of the Council of the Art Union of London, this engraving is reduced from their plate of 'Come Along.'*

two fellow-pilgrims on one road, with one Leader, and yet afraid to speak of Him. And yet we have known some young reapers who have crossed the stream with a sheaf to lay before their Redeemer's throne, as in the case of a nurse who dates her conversion to the artless pleadings with her of a little child just before he left her.

'Shouldst thou send me forth with the Word that saves,  
To the children that groan as Egypt's slaves,  
    My brethren who toil  
    On a tyrant's soil,  
Where they find no rest except in their graves,—  
On such an errand I willingly run,  
Through the twelve hours mark'd by the shining sun,  
    If at the close  
    I be of those  
Who are welcomed back with Thy sweet "Well done."

'Or if to the field Thou shouldst bid me go,  
Where the reapers reap, where the sowers sow,  
    With seed in my hand,  
    I should join the band  
Who sow in hope, though their tears still flow ;  
I should scatter the seed in the soft black loam,  
Looking on to the time Thou shouldst bid me come,  
    Bringing back sheaves  
    As one who weaves  
A crown of joy for the harvest-home.'

NINTH DAY.  

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**A Threefold Cord.**

‘All things are of God.’—2 COR. v. 18.

‘All things are for your sakes.’—2 COR. iv. 15.

‘All things work together for good.’—ROM. viii. 28.

‘ALL things are of God.’

It is very easy to say this when all is going well and our desires are granted, but it is equally true when our desires are crossed and our plans thwarted. How thankful we should be to recognise that God’s Hand is about our lives! and yet it is very hard to have no will of our own. The Lord has made us for Himself.

‘The more the marble wastes,  
The more the statue grows.’

We must not mind what seems to us waste and unnecessary chiselling. We do not see the design He has in view in making us a masterpiece of grace for a niche in the Heavenly Temple.

‘All things are for your sakes.’

We can understand God keeping the world in motion and working out His own grand purposes in heaven and earth ; but to think that my little commonplace life should be watched over by Him seems too wonderful. And yet ‘He only keeps the world going on as a school for His children.’ Some day you will understand and read the secret of His glorious plan for you ; meanwhile you must believe that the circumstances of each day are arranged as if He had only you to think of, and that He guards you from numberless dangers of which it is well you do not dream. Some have learned from experience that the things they have dreaded have never turned out to be their real trials, and that brooding too much over the past does only harm.

‘To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,  
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.’

‘All things work together for good.’

It is generally in the blessed Afterward of our trials that we sound this triumphant chord. But He has taught some of His loved ones, even in the midst of the furnace, in the first freshness of



disappointed hope, to say it. A little boy had been disobedient, and was struggling in the misery of wanting his own way. After prayer the victory was gained, and he ran to be the first to do what before he would not do. With a beautiful smile he looked into his father's face and said, 'You've made me good, papa.' Have we not known something akin to this? We have ceased our rebellion, given up the useless struggle, and as we lay back on His glorious will, wondering at our changed selves, we have said with a deep sense of sin, and yet a note of victory, 'Thou hast made me good, Father.'

'He always wins who sides with God,  
To him no chance is lost ;  
God's will is sweetest to him when  
It triumphs at his cost.'

'Ill that God blesses is our good,  
And unblest good is ill ;  
And all is right that seems most wrong  
If it be His sweet will.'

## TENTH DAY.



## Carrying the Message.

'Thou shalt be as my mouth.'—JER. xv. 19.

IT was an autumn day in an ancient capital of North Germany. In honour of the Emperor's visit, the streets were gaily decorated with flags and arches, and some looked forest-like with double rows of fir trees fixed in the ground. There was one who could not mingle in the throng of sight-seers; for the hotel was unusually busy, and Gretchen could not be spared. She was very kind to the foreign lady who was kept by illness from joining in the festivities.

When told of a recent sorrow, Gretchen said: 'Ach, ich habe auch ein Kind gehabt! Ich war nur fünf Viertel Jahre verheirathet als mein Mann starb. Ein Monat später war mein Kind geboren. Es lebte nur eine halbe Stunde. Ja, ich liebe Kinder. Jetzt habe ich Niemand, aber es muss geschehen,

und wass haben wir weiter? Wir müssen nur ertragen.'<sup>1</sup> The lady went on to tell her that there was One who loved supremely; and each word was eagerly drunk in. A friend coming in continued the conversation. Gretchen's face was a study. She stood transfixed. Hearing the servants' dinner-bell, she only said, 'Das macht Nichts' (That doesn't matter). As the way of salvation was explained, tears were in her eyes, and at last she said solemnly, 'Jetzt verstehe ich' (Now I understand), and left the room. In the afternoon she said she was happier, and saw all differently.

The travellers were glad that for another reason they had been kept a day longer in the hotel. It is a solemn moment when the destiny of an immortal soul is hanging in the balance. Satan is giving his last pull before resigning the prey; angels are looking on; the Father's and the Son's heart of deepest love and tenderness is laid bare. Such is a moment worthy of heaven's calendar!

<sup>1</sup> 'Ah, I also had a child! I was only married a year and a quarter when my husband died. A month after my child was born. It only lived half an hour. Yes, I love children! Now I have no one; but it must be; and what more have we? We have only to bear it.'

## ELEVENTH DAY.



## Kidron.

'He went forth . . . over the brook Cedron,'—JOHN xviii. 1.

THE first figure that we see reflected in this brook is the weeping, exiled King, as He passes over to ascend Mount Olivet. Into its waters were thrown, by the command of the good King Asa, the ashes of the idol made by his mother. His example was followed by Josiah, when he burned all the vessels of Baal in the fields of Kidron, and cast into the brook the dust of the altars. It seems to have been a very fountain of cleansing for Jerusalem, in whose waters they hid all defilement; for again, at the cleansing of the temple, the Levites carried thither all the uncleanness that they found in it and the idolatrous altars, and cast it into the brook.

When the King of Assyria came to invade the land, Hezekiah stopped all the waters of the

fountains which were without the city, and among them the brook Kidron, willing rather to curtail their own supply than that they should aid in any way the army of the aliens. We fancy we can see Nehemiah riding through the darkness of the night out of one of the gates of Jerusalem, and silently passing along by the brook to view the wall laid waste by the destroyer.

But all these memories are forgotten when we come to think of that night which makes it for ever a hallowed stream. After Christ's parting words to His disciples, and His prayer to the Father, His first act was to go over this brook. We cannot imagine the thoughts that filled His mind as He crossed its waters, which at that moment, we may almost say, divided His life into two great parts. Behind Him lay His life of service wherein He fulfilled His Father's will; before Him the great consummation of His life-work, His agony and death. Truly its very name ('obscure') fitly describes that hour when even His disciples understood the meaning of that midnight walk as little as the pebbles of the brook which served Him as a stepping-stone to His great work. Only He and the Father knew the meaning of His life and death. We can now retrace His

steps, and read their meaning by the light issuing from His empty tomb.

One promise still waits for its fulfilment at the coming of the Lion of the tribe of Judah to break the seal ; for Jeremiah tells us that at His return ' the whole valley . . . and all the fields, unto the brook of Kidron . . . shall be holy unto the Lord.'

'Thou land of the Cross and the glory,  
Whose brightness at last will shine  
Afar through the earth—what a story  
Of darkness and light is thine !

'He died as a lamb ; as a lion  
He spares thee, nor can forget  
His desolate exile of Zion ;  
He waits to be gracious yet.'

## TWELFTH DAY.

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## Three Comes.

‘Come now, and let us reason together.’—ISA. i. 18.

‘Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.’—MARK vi. 31.

‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom.’—MATT. xxv. 34.

‘**C**OME now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.’ It is wonderful that God should so speak to the sinner. It reminds us of where Jeremiah says, ‘Yea, let me reason the case with thee’ (margin). What condescension ! There are some doubting hearts to whom light would sooner come, if, instead of reading books or arguing with others, they would go right into God’s presence and state the case to Him. But Satan tries hard to keep a man off his knees ; he knows that would be half the victory. ‘Though your sins had been ten thousand times

more in number than they are, Christ would wash them away,' wrote an honoured servant of God to a dying friend.

George H. Stuart, of whose noble labours in connection with the Christian Commission in the time of the civil war in America we have all heard, relates the following story. He had been detained at a meeting some distance from Washington, and wished to enter the town late that night. On stepping out of the carriage, the sentinel approached, saying, 'Who goes there?' 'A friend.' 'Give the countersign.' 'Minnesota.' The sentinel raised his gun, saying, 'Wrong; go back, Mr. Stuart.' He had to drive some miles, and when he found his friend, the latter said, 'Oh yes, I was wrong. Minnesota was the word for last night, but Massachusetts is the word for to-night.' Again the carriage stopped. 'Who goes there?' 'A friend.' 'Give the countersign.' 'Massachusetts.' 'Pass on.' As he passed in, Mr. Stuart put his hand on the sentinel's shoulder, saying, 'How did you know me?' 'I heard you address a meeting one evening, and I have never forgotten you, otherwise I should have shot you.' 'Have you got *the* countersign?' asked Mr. Stuart. 'The



blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,' was the prompt reply.

'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place.'

There was much coming and going, and Christ saw that His disciples needed rest and solitude. In the very thick of active service, when we think the labourers could least be spared, the command has gone forth from the Lord of the harvest and their places are vacant. But it is never 'go,' it is always 'come,' and the desert changes into a garden because of the presence of the Rose of Sharon.

'Come, ye blessed of My Father.'

The Bible is burdened with Comes, and each one who has heard is a new chord to vibrate with the sound. It is comforting to know that the familiar word which we have heard so often from our Beloved here below will be the command of welcome from the Great White Throne. The scene of that day we cannot imagine; we only know that He who called us at the first, and was with us in the desert places, will Himself usher us into the kingdom.

## THIRTEENTH DAY.



## Standard-Bearers.

'Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth,'—Ps. lx. 4.

WE have often seen in school processions banners of all sizes flying in the breeze, and the step quickened at the sound of stirring music. The message on large imposing flags was sometimes difficult to read, because the wind did not easily lift the heavy folds; while the letters on the smaller ones, carried by little children, shone in the sun and caught the eye. Shall we not each realize that a little banner is put into our hands by the great Standard-Bearer? How wonderful is that word, '*committed* to us the word of reconciliation'! Every time we help another to read it, it becomes more legible to ourselves. Sometimes the teacher gets a lesson from the one taught, and

God sends us comfort where we only thought of trying to give it.

In a little wayside inn at the foot of the Niederwald a lady was admiring the broad view from her window. The lighted boats steamed quietly down the Rhine, and the dark green fir trees stood out on the hill-top against the rosy sky. The season for visitors was past, and the pretty country servant girl had time to linger as she arranged the room. She listened gladly to the message of salvation. As the lady told her of the death of her little boy, the girl said, 'Ach! der liebe Gott wollte einen Engel haben, und als Sie denselben Weg gehen, da werden Sie einen Vorgänger finden.'<sup>1</sup> The peasant girl's little word was as a drop of dew to a drooping flower.

We must never be discouraged though we find ourselves repelled. Many means are employed in the saving of one soul. A young believer had the privilege of a day's visiting with the late honoured servant of Christ, Mr. Grant of Arndilly. He sent her into one house while he took the next. His young friend came out, saying with

<sup>1</sup> 'Ah! the dear Lord wished to have an angel, and when you go the same road, you will find a forerunner there.'

disappointment, 'The woman seemed quite satisfied with herself, and would hardly listen.' 'Do not be discouraged,' he said ; 'you have removed the loose stones to-day, some one else will come and break the rock.'

We may mention here, for those who wish to be standard-bearers, a work among railway officials, which may be suitable for some who can with difficulty go beyond their own home. The object is to provide those working on the lines, once a month, or oftener, with attractive and interesting periodicals, accompanied by a suitable little book. These may be either left with the station-master, or given individually. Those who may wish further information will find it well described in a little book entitled, *Scattering Seeds of Kindness*.<sup>1</sup>

'The banner of love, the banner of love,  
It will cost you a pang to hold ;  
But 'twill float in triumph the field above,  
Though your heart's blood stain its fold.'

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<sup>1</sup> Copies may be had of Mr. Cheevan, 146 Marylebone Road, N.W., price 1d.

FOURTEENTH DAY.  

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*The Fourth in the Fire.*

'The form of the fourth is like the Son of God.'—DAN. iii. 25.

**I**N the truest meaning of the word, we have sympathy from Jesus. At best, our sympathy sent to friends in distress is poor, and what we have received may only have jarred on us. What helped us most was when we met a friend who had come through the same form of trial. This in the highest possible sense is true of Christ, for He has been tried in all points. He can and does make great transformations in our hearts and homes. Has He come and put out your brightest light, so that you expected to walk in darkness all the rest of your days? But, lo! the Sun of Righteousness has arisen and fills your horizon, chasing the darkness. It was a dear price you paid, but now you would not have it otherwise, either by recalling your lost treasure or by blotting

out the memory of those days when He was with you.

When the three Hebrews were in the furnace, not only did God their Father look on as they walked there, not only was the Angel of the Covenant an anxious Watcher at the edge of the flames—He walked along with them. He did not temper, nor restrain, nor quench the flames, but made them powerless over the objects of His sympathy. Three men were cast bound into the seven times heated flame: they are seen walking loose with a Fourth among them. Blessed fire that brings such a Companion! When they shall come forth, not a hair of their head shall be singed, nor the smell of fire have passed upon them. The three may have felt, when cast into the fire, as if God had forgotten them. Long afterwards the disciples said, when Jesus was asleep on the pillow, 'Master, carest Thou not that we perish?' though He was ready to work a marvelous deliverance.

The foregoing simple words were made a comfort to a suffering child of God, who says that the thought of the Fourth in the fire changed her whole trial, for now she realizes that Jesus is always by her side.

Nebuchadnezzar trembled at the sight of the Fourth in the fire. On the coronation day of Catherine de Medici, the face of a dying Huguenot, who was burnt before the palace window for her amusement, so shone that he became an object of terror. Even after his limbs began to drop off in the flames, he gazed upon the king with such a calm, steady, fearless eye, that for nights Henry's sleep was haunted by the vision. Jesus had been with His martyr in the fire.

' As grapes when pressed give out their wines,  
Crushed roses yield perfume ;  
As brilliants hide in gloomy mines,  
As flowers grow from the tomb ;  
So from the sorrows of our hearts,  
From blighted hopes, from fears,  
From sorest wounds by Satan's darts,  
Bliss flows through after years.'

## FIFTEENTH DAY.



## Storing and Scattering.

'God gives His mercies to be spent ;  
Your hoard will do your soul no good ;  
Gold is a blessing only lent,  
Repaid by giving others food.'

'Let every one of you lay by him in store.'—I COR. xvi. 2.

MANY do not dream of the happiness they lose by not obeying this command, to lay by in store as the Lord hath prospered us. When we can do so on the first day of the week, or when money comes to us at stated periods, then it does not raise the question as each call comes, whether we can afford to give, but we just go and gladly give out of what is in the Lord's store. Be it half, or a fifth, or a tenth, the Lord will bless it, and bless us in the giving ; and make us realize in our happy experience the truth of His own saying, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'



When Israel was cursed with a curse, and groaning for deliverance, the prophet came to them with this message, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing.' When Paul closes his sublime resurrection chapter by exhorting the brethren to abound in the work of the Lord, he immediately gives the practical application by saying, 'Now concerning the collection.'

We who are older, and find the lesson hard to learn, might at least train the young. It is a great source of happiness when each child in a family has a missionary-box for some special object, to be brought down every Sabbath, and opened on their birthdays. Much happier are they in dropping the money into the box, than in keeping it for themselves, and pretty it is to see an older brother teach the baby fingers to drop in the pennies.

A little boy of five lay dying of scarlet fever. He had learnt to love Jesus, and heard with great interest of the work in heathen lands, and he used to speak of going out some day as a missionary to China. He had some money given by different

friends lying in the bank. When he was unable to speak without suffering, his father bent over him, saying, 'What shall we do with your money?' He was silent. 'Shall we give it to Jane?' He shook his head. 'To George?' Again he shook his head. 'To baby?' Still no response. 'Shall we leave it in the bank?' Still the little head showed signs of disapproval. Then his father said, 'Shall we send it to China?' There was a distinct nod of the head, and a look of pleasure, mingled with pain, as he whispered, 'Yes, for they won't get *me* now.'

'Give, as the morning that flows out of heaven,  
Give, as the waves when their channel is riven,  
Give, as the free air and sunshine are given,  
Lavishly, utterly, carelessly give.

'Not the waste drops of thy cup overflowing,  
Not the faint sparks of thy hearth ever glowing,  
Not a pale bud from thy June roses blowing,  
Give as He gave thee, who gave thee to live.'

## SIXTEENTH DAY.



## Jericho.

'Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.'—LUKE xix. 1.

THE story of this city is one which we tell to the little children, who all know of the march for seven days round its walls until they fell. We can easily picture it to ourselves, and the eye rests on the house with the scarlet line. Then there was the prophecy in connection with its rebuilding, and the terrible fulfilment.

Here Elijah and Elisha came, and not far off was the scene of Elijah's translation. To this city of palm trees came the procession of Judean captives, who, but for the word of the prophet Obed, would have been kept as bond-slaves by their northern brethren. Now there is not a palm to be seen, where before rich dates were gathered; but we are told that soil and climate only await the hand of the husbandman to yield a rich return.

One event there is which will ever endear Jericho to our hearts. A greater than Joshua is here; for again His feet stand near these walls, who came before as Captain of Jehovah's host, but is now the Man of Sorrows. Here again, as in the case of Rahab, there is a lost sheep to be reclaimed. Jesus must have remembered the faith of His ancestress as He passed through her town. There was a crowd following Him, and one in that crowd, to whom that walk along the dusty road would be ever memorable. The work of grace had begun in the heart of Zaccheus. He sought to see Jesus; but he was little of stature, and could not even catch a glimpse of the Master. His quick eye watched the windings of the road till he descried a sycamore tree, its broad boughs stretching across the highway. He ran and climbed into the branches, and as the surging crowd passed underneath, his eye at last rested on the one face he cared to see. It had been reward enough when Christ's eye met his, but he was filled with wonder to hear his own name in the command, 'Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.' Little did he heed the crowd's murmuring: 'He

is gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner  
He made haste and came down, and received  
Christ joyfully. The To-day when he received the  
homeless Christ to abide in his house in Jericho  
among the far back Yesterdays. Through all the  
To-days of For Ever, he has now been received  
abide in the Father's house of many mansions.

'Zaccheus climbed the tree,  
And thought himself unknown ;  
But how surprised was he  
When Jesus called him down !  
The Lord beheld him, though concealed,  
And by a word His power revealed.'

## SEVENTEENTH DAY.

## The Name of Jesus.

‘The name of the Lord is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.’—PROV. xviii. 10.

‘**W**HAT is His name?’ God said to Moses that this answer was to be given to the children of Israel, ‘I am that I am.’ And so in different ways,—sometimes grand, as if to crush us by their weight (as, Mighty God), then comforting (as, The Lord our Righteousness),—does the Son reveal Himself to us, until in the fulness of time the angel came, saying, ‘Thou shalt call His name *Jesus*.’ What has this name not accomplished in all ages, whether made as a pillow for a suffering child of the kingdom, or as a watchword of victory in the camp of war !

There was one lying in weakness who was heard saying, ‘Jesus ! Jesus !’ When spoken to, she said, ‘Oh, it just does me good to repeat His name.’

A little child had said its nightly prayer, kissed its mother, and was laid for sleep. The little head rose again, she looked round, and sweetly said, 'Good-night, Jesus.'

An old African king once ordered a salvo of artillery for the name of Jesus, reminding us of the text, 'That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.'

Bishop Beveridge lay dying. Those around him wished to recall him to consciousness, and repeated many familiar names, ending with that of his wife who was bending over him. It was of no avail. The name of Jesus was next softly uttered, at which the whole countenance beamed forth in loving recognition; the hand was raised, and the lip began to move, as if trying to proclaim that Name above all others dear to him, and he was gone!

'How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.

'Dear Name! the Rock on which I build,  
My Shield and Hiding-place;  
My never-failing treasury, filled  
With boundless stores of grace.'

## EIGHTEENTH DAY.

## On the Way Home.

‘And then from that bright throne  
I shall look back and see  
The path I trod, and that alone  
Was the right path for me.’

‘He led them on safely, so that they feared not.’—Ps.  
lxxviii. 53.

‘And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a  
cloud . . . and by night in a pillar of fire.’—EX. xiii. 21.

A TRAMP was brought into a London small-pox hospital. As the nurse bent over him, asking his name, she heard him say, ‘Pilgrim Zionward.’ His words were a short, true description of those who have been turned round, and had their faces set in the right direction. Often, when we are in perplexity, we wish that there were a cloudy pillar still; and yet as truly now as then, the angel of the Lord is going before us. Even here He brings us into ‘prepared places’ on our



way to the Kingdom prepared for us. If we believed in and looked up for God's guidance,

'What only seemed a barrier,  
A stepping-stone would be ;'

and as we came to a turn on the road, we should find that He had indeed been before us, making our 'mountains a way.'

'We are going home,  
We are almost there,  
No more to roam,  
Not anywhere.

'We are going home,  
The house in view ;  
That last hill's climb,  
This will be too.'

We may plead the promise and have it fulfilled in our own experience, that the Lord 'would create on our dwelling-places a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night.' Why should it not be, when we have the Father of Lights ready to make our path a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day? What is light to us is darkness to the world, for

they comprehend not this marvellous light. We must see to it that we are light-bearers looking ever to Jesus, and so shining—not with a flash or flicker, but with a steady flame—that the world, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Once a child with wistful eye,  
Gazing on the starry sky,  
Asked, 'Are these the bright nails driven  
Through the golden floor of heaven?'

Older children also gaze  
Into heaven's mysterious maze,  
Ask the secrets of the sky,  
Dazzling the bewildered eye.

But our eyes would look afar  
To the bright and morning star,  
Which arose o'er this dark earth  
At the blessed Saviour's birth.

## NINETEENTH DAY.

**His Wings.**

‘Under His wings shalt thou trust.’—Ps. xci. 4.

**O**UR longing this morning, as we thought of some difficulty lying across our path, may have been, ‘Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest!’ But no real rest will ever come to us in fleeing from God’s appointed way for us. ‘If you would flee from God,’ says Augustine, ‘flee to God.’

Before we pass to the day’s work, let the shadow of His wings rest over us, that the healing and the peace which they bring may strengthen our souls. It was beneath these wings we found our refuge at first, and daily we must return to them. ‘I will make my refuge in the covert of thy wings.’ From this follows our twofold occupation in that covert, first trusting, and then rejoicing.

This image is a favourite one in Scripture. In

Exodus we read, 'Ye know . . . how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.' We find Ruth trusting under His wings: 'A full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.' It is not unlikely that David, who speaks so often of these wings, first heard of them when a little boy playing at his great-grandmother's knee.

With this image we connect the supplying of the two great wants in our pilgrimage, *healing* and *strength*: 'Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings;' and, 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up on wings as eagles.'

But this word which Old Testament saints filled with spiritual thought, finds its deepest, tenderest meaning, when the Man of Sorrows, as He gazes for the last time over the Holy City, lays bare His heart of love, crying, 'Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' Once, when we were children, we saw the shadow of His wings covering a sick one so

that her room became only the vestibule of the King's palace. She had crossed the Atlantic in search of health only to die, but not before the Great Physician had met and healed her. One morning she surprised her doctor by telling him how the waking hours passed so sweetly, for each chime of her little clock had been made to sound a message from her sympathizing Saviour. At the first morning hour came the single word 'Trust,' and it was the key-note of those days of suffering. During those sixteen years, many have found comfort in her simple plan of having a text for each hour of the clock, and there may still be one to whom the thought is new. The beautifully-fitted dressing-case and silver fruit-knife, on which her name is engraved, still remind us of those days when she lay on the borderland, and told us of the glimpses given to her far-reaching eye of the land beyond the river.

'I have nought to fear;  
This darkness is the shadow of His wing;  
Beneath it I am almost sacred. Here  
Can come no evil thing.'

## TWENTIETH DAY.

## Perfect through Sufferings.

‘Being made perfect; He became the author of eternal salvation.’—HEB. v. 9.

AND who was thus made perfect? Ponder this account of Him: ‘Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power;’ and then turn to this other word of God: ‘It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.’ Why was the Captain, Jehovah’s fellow, thus made perfect? Wherefore this discipline? He could not have raised us to the heights of glory had He not first sounded the depths of suffering. ‘In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in

things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.'

There are lessons here for all who have been again and again tried by pain and sickness. You were thinking your healing had begun ; you were thinking you had left the fire behind, when you are all at once thrown back again. Does this word not come with inexpressible sweetness, then, to soothe the ruffled spirit : 'We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are. For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren ?' He is to make us know that we are called not only to be *servants*, though what an honour to be allowed just to wash His feet,—not only *friends*, though that were intimacy enough to swell our hearts with joy,—but *brethren*, fellow-heirs with Christ, sons of God. There is not a dart of sorrow or a pang of pain that reaches us, but has first pierced the heart of the Man of Sorrows. It has left the sharpness there, and reaches us charged with love. Then He invites us to come and still the feverish throbblings of our

heart by resting it on His; and with His own divine hand He makes all our bed in our sickness.

Luther once looked on a suffering child of God and said: 'What am I? a mere *Talker* beside this great *Doer*.' There is an express command for such: 'Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing.' Sufferers would do a noble work if they would set each one over whom they have any influence to work. It is not easy to see others taken instead of us, and yet in this way 'He will multiply our seed sown, and increase the fruits of our righteousness.'

'Satan has been suggesting hard thoughts of Jesus,' said a dying believer lately. 'He has been whispering to me, "What is this your Beloved is doing? giving you such glimpses of glory, and yet keeping you here in *suffering*." But he was soon put to flight with the words, "Even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in Thy sight."'

'And if darker clouds encrust Thee,  
Though Thou slay me, I will trust Thee;  
For Thy hurt is simple healing, and Thy darkness simple day.'



TWENTY-FIRST DAY.  

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**The Lake of Galilee.**

‘Calmly He rose with sovereign will,  
And hushed the storm to rest.

“Ye waves,” he whispered, “Peace! be still!”  
They calmed like a pardoned breast.’

‘Jesus came nigh unto the sea of Galilee.’—*MATT.* xv. 29.

**W**HO of us have not wished to wander along the shores of this lake, gathering pebbles and tiny shells, or pulling wild-flowers along its side, to carry away and store up among our treasures? As we cannot do this, let us gather into one full chord some of the varied tones which still echo to us from the Harp of Galilee (its Old Testament name, Chinnereth).

Travellers tell us how they meet on every side the prophecies of Christ fulfilled in the desolation of the once proud cities of Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum. Water-fowl haunt undisturbed the deserted shores, and even the fish are not

scared by the sound of travellers' feet. One who visited the lake says he saw but one solitary sail on its waters ; and yet the creeks and coves are there where numberless boats were moored by the congregations who gathered round our Lord, and there are still the smooth boulders on which the people sat. Here the disciples received their first call, and hence they were afterwards despatched to begin the first home mission work.

Some sower scattering his seed suggested to Jesus as He sat by the sea-side the parable ; and as He saw tares mingling with the wheat, He said, 'Let both grow together until the harvest.' Not far off, the fragments left by the five thousand were gathered by the willing disciples ; and we fancy that even then there would still be enough to supply the evening meal of some hungry birds. Of the hills around, one re-echoed the Sermon on the Mount, and one was illuminated by the Transfiguration light. At one time Jesus slept on its waters, heeding not the storm till the moment came when He was to calm it. At another, He left the mountain-top because He knew His disciples were in trouble ; and in the grey dawn the swelling waves bore His blessed feet as He came to their help.

On its shore, after a night of toil and failure for the fishermen, Jesus visited for the last time the familiar spot, and was seen in the early morning beside the fire of coals. But the disciples knew Him not until His power was made known in the hundred and fifty and three fishes filling the unbroken net. Here they had their last meal together; and the words, 'Follow thou Me,' linger on our ears as the last words of the loving Lord that mingled with the ripple of its waters on the shingly shore.

'How pleasant to me thy deep blue wave,  
O sea of Galilee !  
For the glorious One who came to save  
Hath often stood by thee.

'Fair are the lakes in the land I love,  
Where pine and heather grow ;  
But thou hast loveliness far above  
What Nature can bestow.

'O Saviour ! gone to God's right hand !  
Yet the same, Saviour still,  
Graved on Thy heart is this lovely strand  
And every fragrant hill,'

## TWENTY-SECOND DAY.



## Prayer.

‘Be not afraid to pray : to pray is right.  
Pray, if thou canst, with hope, but ever pray,  
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay ;  
Pray in the darkness, if there be no light.

But if for any wish thou dar’st not pray,  
Then pray to God to cast that wish away.’

‘The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears  
are open unto their prayers.’—1 PET. iii. 12.

**S**UCH is the heritage the believer has in the Lord,—His eyes over them, His ears open to them. If this were true for us in an earthly sovereign, what might we not hope to accomplish ? Yet it is the Prince of the armies of Jehovah who places Himself at our disposal. But the blank cheque-book, with His royal signature on every leaf, lies unused ; and we have no answer ready

when He comes, saying to us each morning, 'What is thy petition?' 'Some will be eternally saved,' said one, 'who yet will be eternal losers.'

When we are led to pray specially for any one, we may take it as a sign that God has a purpose of grace to that soul. Sorrow and disappointment had fallen heavily on a young lady, crushing sorely the fair young life. A believing sister, who shared her room, watched silently the struggle in her soul, and saw her night after night on her knees in mental agony, yet dared not speak. But she made it her constant prayer that this strange trial, which she feared her sister would either chafe at or sink under, might be instead the chariot which was to carry the Prince of Peace to her door. She also asked that she might soon know the best and truest human love. Before a year was out she was a rejoicing Christian, married to one of God's servants, and putting others to shame by her constant service.

Every one of God's children might have a record of answers such as these. But some have years to wait; and it may only be in a letter found in a desk after the one prayed for has gone that we may hear of the answer. For others we must

wait till we are safe at home. What surprises await us there! Till then let us try never to be long alone with a fellow-believer without going together into the presence of the Unseen.

A ceaseless stream of prayer, in every variety of case, from all corners of the world, is ever pouring itself into the heart of the great Father, from the youngest child just able to lisp His name, to the old grey-headed pilgrim who enters into rest with the words still on his lips, 'Our Father.'

'The saints in prayer appear as one,  
In word and deed and mind,  
While with the Father and the Son  
Sweet fellowship they find.'

## TWENTY-THIRD DAY.



## Praise.

'Give thanks, give thanks, my soul, and sing,  
Give thanks, give thanks always.  
Give thanks, for the least little thing  
Is great, if turned to praise.'

'Now will I praise the Lord.'—GEN. xxix. 35.

WE have all found when we were downcast, that if we could only begin first to meditate on all God's goodness, and then to praise, we were lifted out of ourselves and left happy. Praise is the atmosphere in which God lives: 'He inhabiteth the praises of Israel,' and all murmuring and repining are quickly silenced there. Those who live nearest to Him who is the Leader of the praise, praise most, and consequently live that attractive life which gains those outside.

A soul, like other instruments of delicate construction, has its tuning times. To test one instru-

ment by another were of no use ; it, too, may have fallen far below the true concert pitch. But the great Master comes, and as His hand runs over the keys, He makes us hear the discord ; now He must mend a broken string, then a jarring note must be made sweet. It is not an easy process, but it must be endured if our lives are to be in harmony with His.

Here at best it is only the bass sounds deep and low ; up there is the treble, as one has sung :

‘ The Lord’s

Wand beckons ; we here beat out our life’s bass,  
While He builds up the treble in His own high place.’

Many have got their first sight of salvation when they ceased striving and struggling, and just said : ‘Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.’ This reminds one of the little gipsy boy who was visited in the encampment by a Christian lady. As he lay dying, she whispered to him the ‘old, old story,’ which he had never heard before. ‘Who is the kind Gentleman?’ was his eager inquiry. She told him more of all that Jesus bore for us. The little fellow looked up into her face, and putting his small hands together, exclaimed : ‘To think I



have never thanked Him !' The lady replied :  
'You know of His love now, Jamie, and He is  
taking you to His home to thank Him for ever  
there.'

Let us to-day, as we read this, raise a new song :

'The fowler's snare is broken,  
And loosed my captive wing ;  
And shall the bird be silent  
Which Thou hast taught to sing ?  
In the dust I leave my sackcloth,  
As a thing of other days ;  
For Thou girdest me with gladness,  
And thou robest me with praise.

'Oh, ye who sit in darkness,  
Ever mourning for your sin,  
Open the windows of your soul,  
Let the warm sunshine in :  
Every ray was purchased for you,  
By the matchless love of One  
Who has suffered in the shadow,  
That you might see the sun.'

## TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

**Heaven Opened.**

‘Hereafter ye shall see heaven open.’—JOHN i. 51.

**T**HESE words were spoken by Jesus to Nathanael. He must have had in His mind that night at Bethel, when Jacob saw the ladder and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. But now the scene is changed. Before, Jehovah stood above and said : ‘I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac ;’ now, Jesus speaks of Himself as the ladder which is to bridge the chasm. Heaven is brought near. It is not a long unknown journey, because our Leader has been there before.

It is interesting to notice how often the words ‘taken up’ occur in the Bible. ‘Enoch was not, for God took him ;’ ‘It came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven.’ No less than four times do the words occur in Acts i. in the account of the ascension of Jesus. The same

words are used alike of the Elder Brother and His brethren.

Some still have such abundant entrances or such striking circumstances connected with their death as to remind us of the fiery chariot. How many of our noble army of martyrs have testified that the worst their persecutors could do them was only to give them a swifter passage into the presence of their Lord! Let us listen to the testimony of Lawrence Saunders as he walked in triumph to the stake (1550): 'Yes, this our Joseph hath obtained for us His brethren, that Pharaoh the infidel shall minister unto us chariots wherein at ease we may be carried to come unto Him.'

Like precious faith in our day produces like precious fruits. The martyrdoms that we escape are endured by our believing brethren in heathen lands. One of the converts of the Swatow mission, after suffering much persecution for our Master's sake, was led out to a burial-place by some of his fellow-countrymen. 'Worship your ancestors and renounce your faith in this Jesus,' they threatened, 'or we will bury you alive.' 'I cannot give up my faith in Him. Bury me alive,

if you will ; you only send me the sooner to my Saviour,' was his reply.

When death has entered our own homes, we have been so stunned that it was some time before we could look at the glory side. But in this strange way He has struck out a window in Heaven through which a flood of light comes pouring into heart and home. We can remember when, like Jacob, we have set up our stony pillow for a pillar, because of Heaven let down into our room. We had heard of the departure of some dearly-loved one, and as we pictured their home-going we felt, like Bunyan, drawn irresistibly from earth : 'After that they shut up the gates ; which when I had seen, I wished myself among them.'

'How much of heaven flows out into our hearts  
While those we love pass in ! It is as though  
The angels from the shore cast grappling chains  
Into our gliding barque, and drew us near  
To mingle with the blest ; as if we did belong  
Already to the Zion Mount above.  
Might we but hold this golden coast awhile,  
And steer henceforward a directer course  
Nearer the shore, the colours at the mast,  
And bearing everywhere the Captain's name !'

## TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

**Not Condemned.**

‘Neither do I condemn thee : go, and sin no more.’—

JOHN viii. 11.

**W**E see a crowd. The Pharisees are hurrying a woman to hear her sentence of doom from Christ’s lips. She dare not lift up her head for shame. The moments seem as hours. Her sins are nearer to her than the accusing crowd as they pass in swift array before her. She is conscious of a bustle in the crowd, but only expects a stone is being picked up to be cast at her. All is still, and a voice unutterably sweet breaks the silence: ‘Woman, hath no man condemned thee?’ In her answer do we not see signs of the beginnings of faith in that almost shipwrecked soul as she said, ‘No man, *Lord*’? What a sight! The Spotless One standing alone beside a fountain of impurity. Have her ears betrayed her? No.

Instead of the sentence of doom comes the word of peace and pardon: 'Neither do *I* condemn thee: go, and sin no more.'

On a communion day in Edinburgh there was at the Lord's table 'a woman of the city which was a sinner.' She had been cleansed in the blood that cleanseth from all sin, and admitted to the fellowship of the household of faith; and when she now sat down for the first time at the family table, she found herself seated next one of 'the elders of the church,' somewhat, perhaps, as in the narrower circle of a kindly home, the helpless little one is brought nearest to its mother's care. The 'one bread' had been partaken of; and now 'the cup of blessing' was passing round from hand to hand, according to the manner. When it came to this dear woman, there came upon her such a sense of her own unworthiness, that she trembled to touch it, and was ready to let it pass, when the venerable man beside her—the Rev. John Duncan—rose up, and holding out the cup with both hands, said, 'Oh, but take it! *It's for a sinner.*' It was as the voice of the Shepherd calling His own sheep by name, and leading her to fountains of living waters; and she drank that 'drink indeed!' If

your name is 'Sinner,' you are free to that blood ; yes, you are welcome to it.

Let us glance at a few of the times when Christ speaks to women. At His first miracle at the outset of His ministry, the word at first seems harsh, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee ? Mine hour is not yet come ;' and yet it was only what might have been expected from One whose first care was to be about His Father's business. To a stranger, and to a sick one, He uses the tender word 'Daughter.' On the way to Calvary, Jesus turned round to the wailing company and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me.' And as we come to that cross of shame, where we should least expect it, in that amazing self-forgetting love He cries, 'Woman, behold thy son !' After His resurrection He is the same still. His agony and bloody sweat, death and the grave, have only added depths of sympathizing tenderness to the heart of that already Prince of comforters. He says in softest accents, 'Woman, why weepest thou ?'

## TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

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## Zarephath.

‘He arose and went to Zarephath.’—I KINGS xvii. 10.

**I**N the synagogue at Nazareth, Christ spake of the touching incident which occurred at this place. It was indeed the place of a ‘refiner’s furnace’ (Zarephath) of trial to the poor widow. Elijah might have been surprised when he found the woman who was to sustain him at the gate of Zarephath gathering a few sticks, and still more when she said, ‘I have not a cake.’ But he wondered at nothing, knowing that this woman, like the ravens, would bring him the needed supplies, and *she* did not doubt that his ‘Fear not’ was a message from a Higher than he. So ‘she and he and her house did eat many days.’ And there is comfort for us when we meet to-day at Zarephath. Though we cannot expect a resurrection-scene such as came to the poor widow, yet the Resurrection and



the Life Himself is here, and nothing less can meet our case.

‘The face of Jesus Christ’ does bring balm to our bleeding hearts. Look at the Man of Sorrows. These eyes that beamed with love on the little children were wet with tears. What a look is His as He says to you now, ‘I know their sorrows’! You know, and perhaps expect, that the Valley of Achor will become to you, as it has become to others, a door of Hope. But here is something more—‘The Valley of Achor, a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.’ Though you cannot believe it *now*, in the blessed Afterward that is coming even down here you will give thanks that He came and made the hot furnace a resting-place, the Marah sweet by putting Himself, the Tree of Life, into the bitter waters. Trust Him for that while as yet you find the true expression of your feelings in the word, ‘The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.’ He has sent the trial He saw you needed, whether it was a disappointment, or the loss of one who had long cheered the rough places of your pilgrimage, or of some lovely angel form let down for a few months to perfume

your house with the odour of the skies. It will be long before you can trust yourself to go back on what was, or to think what would have been now. Yet it is good for us sometimes to retrace in thought our times of trial ; for

‘We have known that there is often found  
In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,  
A power to virtue friendly.’

Our Lord knew it when He taught Paul to say, ‘Our . . . affliction . . . worketh . . . *while we look at the things unseen.*’ As you gaze into the Home beyond, through the door which has thus strangely been opened for you in heaven, and try to look up into His face, you feel the weaning from earth, and, it may be, a little hand comes and puts your hand in His. Your tears are dried. There is sunlight reflected on your face, the beginnings of the ‘far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’

One result of your sorrow will be the opening in your heart of a new chamber of sympathy for others undreamt of before. A mother was left alone the first Sunday after the loss of her fairest blossom. The curtains round her bed, as all else

in the room, reminded her of her lovely little one, who, not a week before, had been looking up at the green leaves and red birds, and following her with his large blue eyes, as she pulled them aside to let in the light. The only feeling was of one stunned. She opened her Bible, and these words met her eyes : 'The God of all comfort, who comforteth us . . . that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.'

'Then thou the mother of so sweet a child  
Her false imagined loss cease to lament,  
And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild ;  
Think what a present thou to God has sent,  
And render him with patience what he lent ;  
This if thou do, He will an offspring give,  
That till the world's last end shall make thy name to live.'

## TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

*Seeing the Invisible.*

'Lord Jesus ! make Thyself to me  
A living bright reality,  
More present to faith's vision keep  
Than any earthly object seen,  
More dear, more intimately nigh,  
Than even the closest earthly tie.'

'As seeing Him who is invisible.'—HEB. xi. 27.

WE have these lines in the writing of one who more than any other showed us how this living as 'seeing Him who is invisible' was possible. Whether in the daily home life, in work among the cottagers around her Highland home, or with friends in the great city, the words of the hymn were a true rendering of her life. The Unseen was ever present with her, and even on the wedding morning, when earth was to her at its fairest, her last act before leaving her own room

was to gather her bridesmaids and lead them into the presence of the King.

We were resting after a day's visiting with another of the King's maidens. A lovely locket of wrought gold and blue enamel lay on her neck. 'May I open it?' She shook her head. 'No one is allowed to look in there,' bût at last with some reluctance she gave permission. A little slip of paper lay within the gold rim, on which the words were pencilled, 'Whom having not seen I love.' It was the key-note of her life.

One lovely spring morning, as we sat in the tastefully-arranged garden of a hôtel, we heard behind us a light step, and were greeted by the bright smile and welcoming words of Frances Ridley Havergal. When hearts are united in a common love and service, it does not take long to make those who met as strangers fast friends. We shall never forget how she told us of the blessed rest that had come to her from seeing Jesus in everything, unaffected by circumstances, and how as the result of this she had been able to meet in peace a trial which otherwise would have been peculiarly distressing. But now the unseen things *are* such no longer to her, the life of faith is

changed into one of sight. We alter her own words as we sing of her :

‘Thine eyes now see the King ! the very same  
Whose love shone forth upon the curseful tree,  
Who bore thy guilt, who called thee by name.  
Thine eyes do see.

‘Thine eyes now see the King, the Mighty One,  
The Many-crowned, the Light-enrobed, and He  
Hath bid thee share the kingdom He hath won.  
Thine eyes do see.’

But while we are still among things seen and temporal, the commonest may be transfigured if done before the Lord, for

‘All may of Thee partake ;  
Nothing can be so mean,  
That with this tincture, “for Thy sake,”  
Will not grow bright and clean.’

## TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

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## As Little Children.

‘Do not sin against the child.’—GEN. xlii. 22.

‘Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me.’—MARK ix. 42.

WE connect Christ’s name with that of a little child. ‘To be near a child is to be near the kingdom of heaven.’ On earth He loved them, and in heaven they have a special place. ‘Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.’ And yet we are not apt scholars in learning from the little children. Too often we question their faith, and offend these little ones, who know, because they believe more than we do. In the virgin soil of their tender hearts the seed has taken root and is already springing up, whilst ours may have become hard and stony. Let us see to it that our ruthless *hands do not nip* the blossom. We must encour-

age their desire to make Jesus a sharer in their joys. To His great heart they are not small as they are to our narrow minds.

A new toy horse which had been promised to a little boy when in health, only came when he lay dying. It was put on his bed, and his mother, when she heard him whisper, 'Jesus,' 'horse,' thought his mind was wandering. But he said, 'I wanted to be sure that Jesus was seeing my beautiful horse.' When he heard that some friends had come to pray that he might be spared, he sent them word not to do it, as he wished to go to Jesus; and to Him he went.

A little curly-headed boy of scarcely two had been hearing from his nurse of all the things the cow gives—milk, butter, cheese, beef, leather, horn to make combs, etc. He looked up in her face, saying, 'Kind cow!' She remembered nothing more of the lesson, but after the child had repeated his nightly prayer, he added, 'God bless cow.' It was his first spontaneous prayer. We forget how each utterance of ours is fashioning their lives. But He did not who walked this earth as peculiarly the children's friend. Some have even had to thank God for a fair flower trans-



planted to the garden above, because of the hallowing influence shed over the children still left in the nursery. At first they questioned: 'When will he come back?' 'Will Jesus give him toys and presents on his birthday?' 'Will he be *goo-ing* to God?' till his memory gradually grew into that of a guardian angel-brother watching from above all their little life. When the older brother was told to stop what he was doing because it would vex Jesus, the little one looked up and said instantly, 'And baby too.'

'Oh! well for the little children that they are gone away,  
They never gave their missives up, nor promised us to stay;  
Just fingered a while with the fringes hung over them out of  
heaven,  
And in between their gazings at God, a glance at us was  
given.

'Oh well for the little children, some office hath fallen free,  
Heaven would take in some wider note, some novel order  
see;  
We lent him to a service, small part on earth appears,  
Oh well for the older people who have children in two  
spheres.'

A little boy was allowed by his father to come into his study whenever he wanted anything—it

might be only his pencil sharpened. One day the well-known tap was heard, and the father said, 'Well, my little man, what do you want?' The reply was, 'Nussing, papa; I only want to be wis 'ou.' Do *we* ever go to our Father, when we do not want anything, simply to have the joy of being alone with Him?

How it would pain us if one of our little ones distrusted us, and yet do we not constantly distrust our Father?

'If our love were but more simple,  
We should take Him at His word;  
And our lives would be all sunshine  
In the sweetness of our Lord.'

## TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

**Sabbath-Keeping.**

'The Sundays of man's life,  
Threaded together on Time's string,  
Make bracelets to adorn the wife  
Of the eternal, glorious King.

Christ hath took in this piece of ground,  
And made a garden there for those  
Who want herbs for their wound.'

'There remaineth therefore a keeping of a Sabbath for  
the people of God.'—HEB. iv. 9 (margin).

**E**DEN was the birthplace of earth's Sabbaths.  
The rest was perfect; and the Creator's  
heart was glad, for as yet no blight of sin had  
touched His handiwork. But when that rest was  
broken, precept and promise were required to  
remind man of God's appointed rest day. 'Re-  
member the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' 'Unto  
*the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths . . . will I*

give . . . a place and a name better than of sons and daughters.' How peculiarly did this day become to the man with the withered hand, and to the woman bowed down for eighteen years, a day of rest, when Christ spoke to them words of healing and of peace! On that day a true Sabbath song arose in the synagogue; for 'all the people rejoiced, and His enemies were ashamed.'

A day came when He showed supremely that the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. 'The women rested according to the commandment.' At least, their hands if not their heart rested. To them it seemed the longest Sabbath they had ever spent. They only half lived, because hope was dead. It was as if they dreamed, when the events of the past terrible days rose before them. During that wakeful night they may have felt that the world was in a transition state. In the grey light, as it began to dawn, behold, there was a great earthquake. Earth had been moved to its centre when He died, and now it added its testimony to the triumphant victory. Christ knew what the troubled hearts of His disciples needed when He chose the message for the evening of

the first Christian Sabbath, 'Pèace be unto you ;' and again, eight days after, 'Peace.'

We cannot tarry to recall the events of the Sabbath when 'almost the whole city' went out to hear the word of God, or join Lydia's little band beside the river.

But Jesus Himself has graciously given us glimpses of the Sabbaths yet to come in John's words : 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.' No wonder that when he met those eyes which are as a flame of fire, that countenance radiant as the sun at noonday, he fell at His feet as dead. From that first faint outline of a heavenly Sabbath, the words reach us : 'I am He that liveth and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen.'

'Each Sabbath stands alone, a separate work in stone,  
Firm 'mid the vast vicissitude of days ;  
Fair floating-isle of time, anchored in other clime,  
Fixed, fascinate by the Eternal's gaze.'

## THIRTIETH DAY.

**Much More.**

'Much more, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.'—ROM. v. 9.

'Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.'—ROM. v. 10.

'Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace . . . hath abounded unto many.'—ROM. v. 15.

'Much more they which receive abundance of grace shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.'—ROM. v. 17.

'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'—ROM. v. 20.

**L**ET us climb these steps, looking in wonder at the view from each ; and at the top we shall be prepared to raise a monument to sovereign grace.

The very order is significant. Paul had been speaking of God's great love in the gift of Jesus, and gives this as the pledge of our salvation from coming wrath : 'Much more, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through

Him.' Many and various are the paths by which human souls are brought to this step from which our upward journey begins. A medical student found himself at the bedside of the daughter of a Moravian missionary. Her widowed mother could scarce afford the necessaries of life, far less provide any alleviation for her suffering. But the poorness of the girl's surroundings only served as a dark background for the brightness of her face, and the contentment and joy of her soul, as she looked at the things that are unseen, and waited for the coming of His feet. From that room the student passed to another, where every modern invention was made to contribute to the relief and ease of the invalid. But even the highest human skill availed not to arrest the disease. No peace was in her heart; and no grateful look was ever given to those who watched beside her. Within a short time of her death, she was talking of the ball dress she meant to wear a few days later. She looked only at the things which are seen. The contrasts of that day were among the elements that went to change the current of the young man's life.

Another step: 'Much more, being reconciled,

we are saved by His life.' It reminds us of His own word : 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'

The next step is a long one, and gives us a wider outlook : 'Much more the gift by grace hath abounded unto many.' Few live as if they believed this. A short time after what we have just told, the student was absent for a few weeks of holiday from the ward of an Infirmary in which he took a prayerful interest. He had given himself to Christ, but had not yet learned to speak of Him to the individual patients. On his return to his work, when he asked how she was, one of the patients said, 'But, doctor, I am saved.' He told her how welcome was the news, when she quickly rejoined, 'I was sure you would be glad. But, you know, I used to think it very hard of you, when you were doing all you could to heal our bodies, and speaking to me day after day in the ward, never to ask, "Is your soul saved?"'

The last step commands the most extensive view : 'The saints reigning in life by One;' and, or ever we are aware, we have placed the headstone, crying, 'Grace, grace!' 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'



## THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

**Jordan.**

'Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan.'—2 KINGS vi. 2.

**A**BOUT a hundred times in Scripture we catch a glimpse of the waters of the Jordan. Much in the lives of Old Testament saints is associated with the district around, but only one outstanding New Testament fact is connected with it.

On its banks was heard the voice of one, crying, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.' More than any other, John the Baptist was acquainted with its neighbourhood. The whole surrounding country was aroused, and all classes shared in the general awakening and preparing of hearts to receive Christ. Publicans, soldiers, Pharisees even, came to inquire of John. But while they were musing and questioning, the Eternal Son Himself came to the river's edge. It was over this stream that the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove

descended, while the voice proclaimed, 'Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased,' as He came up from the waters, fulfilling all righteousness.

Besides being a boundary-line, this river must always have been a great source of fertility to the land of Canaan. The first time we read of it is when the verdure spread by its goodly supply of moisture through all the plain attracted Lot, and made him choose it for his dwelling-place.

Many wonders its waters witnessed, such as the swimming of the iron axe-head, and the cleansing of the Syrian leper. Throughout the Psalms and prophets it supplies poetic images, and from it we have borrowed the image of death as a river to be crossed before entering the Promised Land. Thrice a path was made through its waters—first when the whole host of Israel crossed over its empty bed to possess the land; again when Elisha accompanied Elijah on his way to his translation in the fiery chariot; and lastly, when, invested with his master's mantle, the solitary Elisha came back to continue the prophetic work in Israel.

The God of Elijah is among us still. Even while we write these lines, the birthday of an aged

pilgrim has come round, and on her seventy-fourth milestone she inscribes : ' I am now a great age, and when I look back and think that I never knew a house that I could call my home but the Father's up there ; never knew a person that I could call my relative but my Father in heaven ; never knew any one from whom I had a right to claim a sixpence ; and yet that I have never wanted a friend ; have always had more than I required, not only to supply my own wants but those of others,—I may well say that I owe everything to the Lord's goodness ; and surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life ; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'

Or let us listen again to the voice of one who lies on what is thought to be her deathbed :—

'Where are thy waves, O Jordan?  
Thine emptied bed lies dry,  
And all thy power is broken,  
Thy waters stand on high.

'I fear not Jordan's river :  
Its flood is passed for me ;  
And hasting dry-shod over,  
I soon at rest shall be.'

By Frances Ridley Havergal.

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